

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

September 28, 2004

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DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION
STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL CONVENES FOR FIRST MEETING

The Stewardship Council to the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) held their first meeting on Tuesday, September 28, 2004 at the Elm Bank Horticulture Center, 900 Washington Street in Wellesley.

The 13-member advisory committee, appointed by the Governor to seven-year terms, was established by the 2003 reorganization statute that created the DCR through the unification of the former Metropolitan District Commission and Department of Environmental Management. The statutory duties and responsibilities of the Stewardship Council include developing an oversight strategy of park management plans, capital planning, and policy development, through a process that provides opportunities for public input, and approval of key operational Division Directors for the agency.

In her remarks to the Council at its first formal gathering, DCR Commissioner Katherine F. Abbott elaborated on its role and functions. "The Stewardship Council will provide opportunities for improving and enhancing public communication and outreach; set strategic direction and review policy; build new relationships with diverse constituencies; and, facilitate new public-private partnerships for park management, restoration, rehabilitation, and maintenance."

In her welcome to the Council, Secretary of Environmental Affairs Ellen Roy Herzfelder noted that the Stewardship Council represents outstanding statewide leaders in diverse fields who have a demonstrated commitment to resource protection, recreation and parks management. "The Stewardship Council will integrate the interests and expertise of the public and private sectors and will greatly contribute to the creativity, transparency, and accountability in the Department of Conservation and Recreation. We are enormously grateful to the members for their willingness to join DCR and the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs in advancing and promoting the agency's objectives."

In the course of the meeting, Commissioner Abbott provided a report on agency mission, goals, activities, as well as a financial overview. Following the meeting, a reception was held for the incoming members of the Stewardship Council, agency officials and staff, and members of the public. Additional information about the Stewardship Council and upcoming meetings can be obtained by calling 617-626-4991.

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